



Announcement

VEF Fellowship Program for 2013

IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT THE GRE TEST REGISTRATION

- 1. Please register for the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) General Test as soon as possible.***
- 2. You can register for the GRE General Test at the Educational Testing Service (ETS) website: www.ets.org***
- 3. You MUST list the Vietnam Education Foundation code of 8559 on the GRE registration form as one of the institutions to receive your official GRE score report. In order to find this code, from the dropdown menu of the U.S. states in the registration form, please select Virginia (since VEF is located in Arlington, Virginia) then select the Vietnam Education Foundation.***

The Vietnam Education Foundation (VEF) is pleased to announce the 2013 VEF Fellowship Program. The Fellowship application and selection process is open, competitive, and transparent. Applicants do not need to pay any fees in order to apply or be considered for a VEF Fellowship. Winners are chosen based on individual merit, including academic performance and preparation, intellectual capabilities, English proficiency, and the potential for contribution to scientific education and research in Vietnam.

VEF expects to award approximately 45 Fellowships to Vietnamese nationals to begin graduate studies in the United States in the fall of 2013. The recipients are referred to as the VEF Fellowship 2013 Cohort. Please note that **VEF only accepts online applications**.

1. Qualified Fields of Study

VEF seeks highly qualified applicants interested in **pursuing a Ph.D. or master's degree at leading universities in the United States in the major disciplines of sciences** (natural, physical, and environmental), **mathematics, medicine** (such as public health, epidemiology, and immunology), **engineering, and technology** (including information technology). Fields include the basic sciences, such as biology, chemistry, and physics, as well as agricultural science and computer science. Priority will be given to applicants, whose field of study focuses on climate

change (environmental sciences) or on nuclear energy, provided that all other qualifications are equal.

2. Eligibility of VEF Employees and VEF Contracted Agency Employees

PLEASE NOTE the following VEF policy regarding *eligibility of VEF employees and VEF contracted agency employees in Vietnam and in the United States*.

- Employees of VEF, including contractor employees, and their immediate families, are ineligible for VEF Fellowships, Visiting Scholar Grants, and U.S. Faculty Scholar Grants for a period ending one year following termination of such employment.
- If a former employee or contractor employee of VEF is otherwise eligible and chooses to apply for a VEF Fellowship, Visiting Scholar Grant, or U.S. Faculty Scholar Grant after the one year period, the VEF Board of Directors must approve the submission of such an application.
- Employees of private and public agencies (excluding educational institutions) under contract to VEF to perform administrative or screening services on behalf of the VEF Fellowship, Visiting Scholar, and/or U.S. Faculty Scholar Programs are ineligible for VEF Fellowships, Visiting Scholar Grants, and U.S. Faculty Scholar Grants for a period ending one year following the termination of their services for VEF.

3. Application and Selection Process of VEF Fellows

VEF Fellowship applicants **may apply by using one of two options, Process A or Process B**. The former is for applicants, who have not yet been admitted to a U.S. university graduate program, while the latter is for applicants, who have already received admission to a U.S. university graduate program. Both Processes A and B are described below.

4. Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO)

VEF will organize a **5-day PDO on June 7 - 11, 2013**, before the Fellows depart for the United States. The purpose of the PDO is to inform Fellows about important issues regarding their Fellowship, including academic matters, cultural differences, financial arrangements, and legal issues related to their immigration status. Included in the PDO is an outdoor Team Building event, which may involve one day of camping. During the PDO, official Fellowship documents and immigration documents will be given to the Fellows. It is **mandatory that all VEF Fellows participate** in the PDO. VEF Fellows will need to plan ahead to assure that they are able to attend the PDO since attending this event is a **requirement for all VEF Fellowship awardees**.

PROCESS A AND PROCESS B ARE DESCRIBED BELOW.

PROCESS A

APPLICATION PERIOD- Process A

Applications will be available ONLY online at VEF website at: www.vef.gov

ONLY from 10:00 a.m., February 10, 2012,

to 10:00 a.m., April 10, 2012 (Vietnam time zone).

I. Eligibility

In order to apply, an applicant must meet the all of the following minimum requirements:

- A. **VIETNAMESE by citizenship** and not a permanent resident of Vietnam or a permanent resident or citizen of any other country.
- B. **College graduate** with at least a Bachelor's degree in fields acceptable to VEF (See Item #1 above, *Qualified Fields of Study*) or college juniors (3rd or 4th year) or seniors (final year students), who will graduate with such a degree by July 2013.
- C. **GPA. Overall Grade Point Average (GPA)** from a college/university with **at least 7.0/10.0**. Applicants ONLY with an undergraduate degree must have at least a GPA of 7.0/10.0. Applicants with an undergraduate GPA from 6.5/10.0 to 7.0/10.0 are eligible to apply ONLY if they have a master's degree with a GPA of at least 7.0/10.0 in the same field as the intended field of study. Grades on other scales must be converted into a 10-point scale according to VEF guidelines. A grade conversion scale is available at the VEF website: (http://www.vef.gov/download/conversion_table.htm)
- D. **English Language Proficiency**. The applicant must demonstrate sufficient proficiency in the English language. Any one of the following means is acceptable to demonstrate proficiency.
 - 1. **TOEFL**. A Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score no older than one year from the date of the opening of the online application, specifically nothing earlier than February 10, 2011, of **at least 500 on the Paper-Based Test (PBT)** (either the International or Institutional exam is acceptable), which is equivalent to **173 on the Computer-Based Test (CBT) and 61 on the Internet-Based Test (iBT)**.

Applicants are encouraged to take the International TOEFL instead of the Institutional TOEFL in order to have a valid score in hand when applying to U.S. universities, which do not accept an Institutional TOEFL score. Also, please be aware that most U.S. university graduate schools require an International TOEFL score of 550 or higher. Hence, candidates are encouraged to retake the TOEFL exam even

after passing the VEF interview in order to increase their chances of getting admitted, particularly to competitive universities.

The official ETS website (www.ets.org/toefl) provides information about the TOEFL test including format, scores, registration, practice materials, and locations of testing centers in Vietnam and test dates. Please contact IIG Vietnam at (84-4) 3773 2411 or visit their website: www.toefl.com.vn for more information about the test.

2. **IELTS**. An acceptable alternative to the TOEFL exam is the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam. A **minimum score of 6.5** on an IELTS exam no older than one year from the date of the opening of the online application, specifically nothing earlier than February 10, 2011, is necessary to apply for a VEF Fellowship. For more information, please visit the IELTS website: <http://www.ielts.org/>.
 3. **Degree from an English-speaking country**. An acceptable alternative to the TOEFL or IELTS test is a degree from an English-speaking country. The applicant would need to demonstrate that s/he is studying for a Bachelor's or master's degree in, or has a recent university Bachelor's or master's degree (not more than two years old at the time of applying for the VEF Fellowship) from, a university that conducts all courses in English in any of the following English-speaking countries: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom (England, Ireland, Scotland or Wales), or the United States. The evidence of degree completion from such a university is sufficient evidence of English language proficiency for VEF. Please be aware that U.S. universities may still require an official International TOEFL or IELTS score to apply to graduate schools.
- E. **GRE (Graduate Record Examination)**. To be guaranteed an interview if a candidate becomes a finalist for the VEF Fellowship, the applicant must achieve a **combined score (quantitative plus verbal) of at least 1000** on the GRE General Test (either Paper-Based Test or Computer-Based Test) or the equivalent score on the new GRE test administered since August 1, 2011. Scores can be no more than five years old because the GRE is only valid for 5 years. Specifically, the GRE test scores that you submit can be no older than August 1, 2008, since successful Fellowship candidates would be applying to U.S. universities during the fall 2012 and spring 2013. VEF only accepts the official GRE score report. All applicants must provide to VEF the results of the GRE General Test. The following provides specific details about the GRE tests.
1. **Reimbursement for GRE Test fee**. VEF will reimburse the GRE General Test fee to all VEF Fellowship award recipients, who achieve a combined score (quantitative plus verbal) of at least 1150 or the equivalent score on the new GRE test administered since August 1, 2011. The reimbursement will be given at the PDO in June 2013. Submission of GRE test fee receipts are required in order to get the reimbursement.

2. From now until April 10, 2012, three paper-based GRE General Tests will be held in Vietnam as follows:

Test Dates (MM/DD/YY)	Regular Registration Deadline (MM/DD/YY)	Late Registration Deadline ¹ (MM/DD/YY)	Supplementary Test Center and Monday Administration Registration Deadline ² (MM/DD/YY)	Scores by Phone Date (MM/DD/YY)	Approximate Score Report Mailing Date and View Scores Online (MM/DD/YY)
10/22/11	09/09/11	09/16/11	08/26/11	11/21/11	12/02/11
11/19/11	10/07/11	10/14/11	09/23/11	12/19/11	12/30/11
02/11/12	12/30/11	01/06/12	12/16/11	03/12/12	03/23/12

¹Late registration is available for online registration only for a fee of US\$25. Late registration closes one week after the regular registration deadline.

²Monday test dates will be October 24, 2011, November 21, 2011 and February 13, 2012.

3. The official ETS website (www.ets.org/gre) provides information about the GRE test, including format, scores, registration, practice materials, and locations of testing centers and test dates in Vietnam. Please also visit the website of the Institute of International Education (IIE) in Vietnam (www.iievn.org) for more detailed information on the GRE paper-based Tests.
4. For computer-based GRE test availability, please refer to the website of Nhat Nghe Company, which is authorized by ETS to organize computer-based GRE tests in Vietnam, at: www.nhatnghe.com.

II. Online Applications

*To prepare for the VEF Fellowship online applications, applicants **must** have the following information and documents ready:*

- A. **UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE CERTIFICATE AND TRANSCRIPTS & GRADUATE DEGREE CERTIFICATE AND TRANSCRIPTS (the latter only if applicable)**. Applicants are required to submit evidence of completion of an undergraduate degree (for college graduates) and graduate degree (if applicable), such as a diploma, or certification from the current university (for juniors and seniors) as well as transcripts from undergraduate studies and from graduate studies, if applicable. These documents must be translated into English with an official notarization or with an official school stamp (see under item **I. Eligibility** above).
- B. **EVIDENCE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY**. (see under item **I. Eligibility** above)

C. **GRE SCORE.** (see under item **I. Eligibility** above)

D. **NEW: Formatting of information into 2 statements! ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL STATEMENTS.** Each applicant must prepare a one-page Academic Statement and a one-page Personal Statement. The first essay addresses the applicant's academic and scientific background and preparation, previous research, and a description of the study and research proposed at a U.S. graduate school department. The Personal Statement includes information about the applicant's background, practical experience, special interests, and career goals, with some attention to plans after degree completion. Applicants should also address how they might represent Vietnam as students in the United States and how they might represent the United States and contribute to Vietnam upon return. Each essay must be well-organized and composed in excellent English and must not be more than one A4 page single-spaced, using the Times New Roman font of size 12. The quality and content of these essays will be an extremely important factor in determining the applicant's candidacy for a VEF Fellowship.

A successful Academic Statement will include the following:

Work and Research Experience

- Narrative on academic and work experience.
- Description of any research undertaken with all terms defined and the significance of the work noted. If no formal research has been completed, a description of a project done as part of coursework may be substituted. Jargon and non-defined terminology should be avoided. While research experience is not required as a part of the VEF application, U.S. graduate programs regard it highly.

Academic Intent

- Proposed field of study and research.
- Objectives and impact of one's proposed research or project(s).

A successful Personal Statement will include the following:

Indicators of Past Leadership and Future Plans

- Description of any examples of leadership and involvement in your university or home community.
- Intended future plans upon returning to Vietnam at the completion of the program of study.
- Contribution of your proposed research or project(s) to the development of science and technology in Vietnam.

Building the Relationship Between the United States and Vietnam

- Provide three significant reasons for wanting to pursue a graduate degree program in the United States on a VEF Fellowship. Objectives must be stated clearly with explanations about how a VEF Fellowship would help you achieve your stated objectives.
- Describe how you would help fulfill the mission of VEF as a Fellowship recipient.
- Describe any special role you would expect to play as a VEF Fellow.
- Describe how you expect to build professional ties between the United States and Vietnam.
- Describe how you could be a cultural representative of Vietnam when in the United States and how you might serve as a cultural representative of the United States when you return to Vietnam.

E. **THREE LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION/REFERENCE.** Three letters of recommendation, also known as letters of reference, must be submitted from the applicant's professors, under whom the applicant has studied or pursued research, or from supervisors, who have supervised the applicant's work related to his/her proposed field of study. Recommendation letters must be from individuals, who have supervised the applicant's academic or professional work for at least two years and who know well the applicant's academic and professional performance. The letters must be written in English and on official letterhead with the signature of the recommender. These letters should be distinctly different. Importantly, each writer should demonstrate in his/her letter a very good understanding of the applicant by giving specific examples of interactions and situations observed by the writer that exemplify the outstanding qualities of the applicant.

F. **U.S. UNIVERSITIES.** VEF is committed to assuring that VEF Fellows have the best possible opportunity to acquire high-quality knowledge and training in their field of specialization in order to become leading scientists and engineers in Vietnam. Participation in such programs accords esteem to the VEF Fellow's home country of Vietnam as well as honor to the U.S. university that hosts the VEF Fellow and to the United States for sponsoring such an outstanding individual. VEF suggests, therefore, that the applicant, and eventually the nominee, select universities that provide excellent academic programs and research to meet these goals. The applicant must list **five (5) U.S. universities** and the relevant departments in which s/he wishes to study, including the major within that department, while providing the reasons why each university is a preferred choice. In addition, the applicant must supply the names and titles of **two (2) research advisors/professors with whom s/he might wish to study at each university**, including the reason why the particular advisors/professors were selected. To meet this requirement, VEF advises applicants to **research U.S. universities, the relevant departments and majors, and potential research advisors/professors** well in advance

of the application period. Applicants may wish to consult rankings of graduate programs as guidance, including the National Academies rankings(<http://www.nap.edu/rdp/>) as well as the list of [VEF Alliance schools](#), listed at the VEF website. These schools are top-level U.S. universities that accept VEF financial terms and conditions. In addition, the applicant should utilize the EducationUSA advising centers (located in the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi and in the U.S. Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City) and their resources to find the universities that best fit his/her academic needs and areas of study.

While applicants should consider top schools, departments, and research advisors in their chosen fields, they should also consider “safety schools” to which to apply. A safety school may not be ranked at the top tier, but may still be an excellent school that will allow applicants to achieve their professional goals. VEF suggests choosing 3 to 4 top tier schools and 1 to 2 safety schools among the five schools for which VEF will provide financial support during the application process.

VERY IMPORTANT: Please check carefully the eligibility requirements and meet all the requirements listed above by completing the online application form and submitting all required documents before the application deadline. All information must be submitted by the VEF application deadline. Any missing information or documents will result in an automatic rejection of the application. VEF cannot accept incomplete applications and cannot extend the deadline.

III. Selection Process

To obtain a VEF Fellowship award, an applicant must **succeed in all three rounds** of the selection process, as described below:

ROUND ONE – Qualification Screening

During the application period as indicated above, applicants submit online applications. VEF conducts a basic eligibility screening to assure that the applicant meets all of the minimum requirements. Qualified applicants will be invited to round two of the application process.

ROUND TWO – Oral Exam/Interview

In August 2012, prominent U.S. scientists/professors selected by VEF will carry out Oral Exams/Interviews. The Oral Exam/Interview is conducted in English and lasts up to 45 minutes. The U.S. interviewers will recommend to VEF the candidates, judged to be qualified for a VEF Fellowship, and will confirm the universities they deem appropriate for the candidates. At this point, the recommended candidates are classified as VEF *nominees*. Only VEF nominees are invited to round three of the application process.

ROUND THREE – Admission to a U.S. University

In the Fall 2012, VEF helps the nominees to apply to five (5) leading U.S. universities recommended by the U.S. interviewers, which may include all or some of the universities chosen by the nominees as well as universities recommended by the U.S. interviewers. In all cases, VEF must approve the final list of five U.S. universities. These universities must belong to the VEF Alliance (see the list at the VEF website: http://home.vef.gov/alliance_university.php) or must be a leading U.S. graduate program that must acknowledge acceptance of the VEF financial terms. Financial support terms are available under “VEF Fellowship Program/Resources for Applicants” at the VEF website: (http://home.vef.gov/download/Basic_Financial_Terms_of_VEF_fellowship_grant.pdf).

VEF supports applications to the five approved universities by paying for the following: (1) Fees for GRE and TOEFL score reports to be sent to these five schools; (2) GRE Subject Tests, if required by any of the five approved universities; and (3) application fees for non-Alliance universities among these five approved universities.

If the candidates, who are recommended to graduate school, agree, their contact and application information will be sent to all VEF Alliance universities so that these universities may solicit candidates to apply, including those candidates who were recommended but could not be offered VEF support. The universities may offer their own full funding, if they wish.

Nominees must inform VEF as soon as they get accepted by a U.S. university. **By a date specified by VEF in late March 2013, all nominees must submit to VEF their university admission letters** as well as a letter from each university that acknowledges the acceptance of the VEF financial support terms and a VEF form completed by the university that delineates finances over the duration of the degree program, whether the university is a member of the VEF Alliance or not. Nominees will indicate their priorities by listing which universities they wish to attend in priority order. VEF will then confirm the best university for the nominee to attend, giving highest consideration to universities that the U.S. interviewers recommended. At this point, the qualified nominees are eligible for VEF Fellowship awards.

FELLOWSHIP AWARDS

The final decisions about the VEF Fellowship awards will be made by the VEF Board of Directors in April 2013. Upon approval by the VEF Board of Directors, the nominees are designated as VEF Fellows.

PROCESS B

APPLICATION PERIOD- Process B

Applications will be available ONLY online at VEF website at: www.vef.gov

**ONLY from 10:00 a.m., February 4, 2013,
to 10:00 a.m., March 12, 2013 (Vietnam time zone).**

I. Eligibility

In order to apply, an applicant must meet the following minimum requirements:

- A. **VIETNAMESE by citizenship** and not a permanent resident of Vietnam or a permanent resident or citizen of any other country.
- B. **College graduate** with at least a Bachelor's degree in fields acceptable to VEF (See Item #1 above, *Qualified Fields of Study*) or college juniors (3rd or 4th year) or seniors (final year students), who will graduate with such a degree by July 2013.
- C. **GPA. Overall Grade Point Average (GPA)** from a college/university with **at least 7.0/10.0**. Applicants ONLY with an undergraduate degree must have at least a GPA of 7.0/10.0. Applicants with an undergraduate GPA from 6.5/10.0 to 7.0/10.0 are eligible to apply ONLY if they have a master's degree with a GPA of at least 7.0/10.0 in the same field as the intended field of study. Grades on other scales must be converted into a 10-point scale according to VEF guidelines. A grade conversion scale is available at the VEF website: http://www.vef.gov/download/conversion_table.htm
- D. **Gained official graduate admission** to a VEF Alliance school or to a leading U.S. graduate school, which accepts VEF's financial support terms, in a field acceptable to VEF (See Item #1, *Qualified Fields of Study*, above). Full and unconditional admission is required.

II. Online Applications

To prepare for the online applications, applicants must have the following documents ready:

- A. **DEGREE CERTIFICATES AND TRANSCRIPTS**. Applicants are required to provide degree certificates and transcripts from undergraduate studies and from graduate studies,

if applicable, translated into English with an official notarization or with an official school stamp (see item **I. Eligibility** above).

- B. **NEW: Formatting information into 2 statements!!! ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL STATEMENTS**. Each applicant must prepare a one-page Academic Statement and a one-page Personal Statement. The first essay addresses the applicant's academic and scientific background and preparation, previous research, and a description of the study and research proposed at a U.S. graduate school department. The Personal Statement includes information about the applicant's background, practical experience, special interests, and career goals, with some attention to plans after degree completion. Applicants should also address how they might represent Vietnam as students in the United States and how they might represent the United States and contribute to Vietnam upon return. Each essay must be well-organized and composed in excellent English and must not be more than one A4 page single-spaced, using the Times New Roman font of size 12. The quality and content of these essays will be an extremely important factor in determining the applicant's candidacy for a VEF Fellowship.

A successful Scientific Statement will include the following:

Work and Research Experience

- Narrative on academic and work experience.
- Description of any research undertaken with all terms defined and the significance of the work noted. If no formal research has been completed, a description of a project done as part of coursework may be substituted. Jargon and non-defined terminology should be avoided. While research experience is not required as a part of the VEF application, U.S. graduate programs regard it highly.

Academic Intent

- Proposed field of study and research.
- Objectives and impact of one's proposed research or project(s).

A successful Personal Statement will include the following:

Indicators of Past Leadership and Future Plans

- Description of any examples of leadership and involvement in your university or home community.
- Intended future plans upon returning to Vietnam at the completion of the program of study.
- Contribution of your proposed research or project(s) to the development of science and technology in Vietnam.

Building the Relationship Between the United States and Vietnam

- Provide three significant reasons for wanting to pursue a graduate degree program in the United States on a VEF Fellowship. Objectives must be stated clearly with explanations about how a VEF Fellowship would help you achieve your stated objectives.
 - Describe how you would help fulfill the mission of VEF as a Fellowship recipient.
 - Describe any special role you would expect to play as a VEF Fellow.
 - Describe how you expect to build professional ties between the United States and Vietnam.
 - Describe how you could be a cultural representative of Vietnam when in the United States and how you might serve as a cultural representative of the United States when you return to Vietnam.
- C. **ADMISSION LETTER**. Official letter of admission from a U.S. university, confirming full admission without any conditions, name of degree, level of study (Master's or Ph.D.), department, and major within that department.
- D. **ACCEPTANCE OF VEF FINANCIAL TERMS**. The admitting university must acknowledge in writing on university letterhead acceptance of the VEF financial terms and must complete a VEF form that delineates finances over the duration of the degree program. Financial support terms are available under "VEF Fellowship Program/Resources for Applicants" at the VEF website:
(http://home.vef.gov/download/Basic_Financial_Terms_of_VEF_fellowship_grant.pdf).

VERY IMPORTANT: *Please check carefully the eligibility requirements and fulfill all the requirements listed above by completing the online application form and submitting all required documents before the application deadline. All information must be submitted by the VEF application deadline. Any missing information or documents will result in an automatic rejection of the application. VEF cannot accept incomplete applications and cannot extend the deadline.*

III. Selection Process

To obtain a VEF Fellowship award, a Process B applicant must **succeed in both rounds** of the selection process described below:

ROUND ONE - Qualification Screening

From February 4 to March 12, 2013, the VEF online application will be available. VEF will review applications from Process B applicants, who have been admitted for the Fall 2013 term to at least one leading graduate program in the United States in a field of study

supported by VEF. Furthermore, whether the school is a member of the VEF Alliance or not, the school must acknowledge in writing the acceptance of the VEF financial support terms and must complete the VEF form that delineates finances over the duration of the degree program.

After a screening process by VEF to assure eligibility, a technical review will be conducted by U.S. professors with expertise in the applicant's discipline to determine the applicant's achievements and potential to make a contribution to the sciences as shown by his/her past academic performance, test results, prior research and work experience, honors and recognition, and statement of purpose. The most qualified applicants will be invited to participate in a web-based telephone interview.

ROUND TWO - Interview

In late March 2013, the most qualified applicants will be interviewed by phone. Depending on the number of VEF Fellowships available for Process B candidates, the most highly qualified applicants will be recommended to the VEF Board of Directors for approval.

FELLOWSHIP AWARDS

The final decision on VEF Fellowship awards will be made by the VEF Board of Directors in April 2013. At this point, the recommended candidates will become VEF Fellows.

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Note: The above information is provided as a guideline and is the intended VEF time-line of activities for the selection process for the 2013 cohort of VEF Fellows. VEF reserves the right to make changes as circumstances require. Any changes will be posted ONLY on VEF's official website at www.vef.gov and, therefore, VEF advises applicants to check the VEF website regularly.

After obtaining the VEF Fellowship, all Fellows must strictly observe VEF rules and requirements or they may lose the Fellowship.

If you have any questions regarding the VEF 2013 Fellowship application and selection process, please e-mail VEF at vef2013@vef.gov or phone VEF at (84-4) 3936 3670 in Hanoi, Vietnam.

For more information on VEF and the VEF Fellowship Program,
please visit the VEF website: www.vef.gov